



Speech by

Andrew Cripps

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

Hansard Wednesday, 19 May 2010

INGHAM BYPASS, PETITION

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (10.22 pm): This morning I lodged a petition signed by 1,599 constituents of my electorate, predominantly from the Herbert River district, in relation to the proposal by the department of main roads to upgrade the Bruce Highway between Ingham and the Cardwell Range. The proposal involves a bypass of the township of Ingham. The alignment of the proposed bypass is not yet finalised and is the subject of ongoing consultation with the local community, businesses and industry. The petitioners are concerned the proposed bypass will have a negative impact on Ingham's economy and employment opportunities for local residents.

The upgrade of the Bruce Highway between Ingham and the Cardwell Range is designed to achieve an enhanced level of flood immunity during flood events. This section of highway is notorious for flooding, particularly at Palm Creek in Ingham itself, at the Gairloch washaway north of Ingham and at the Seymour River and Arnot Creek near the base of the Cardwell Range.

Another goal associated with the upgrade includes road safety and removing heavy vehicles from Lannercost Street and Herbert Street in Ingham. Main Roads has undertaken an extensive consultation process, involving regular community newsletters and face-to-face meetings with landowners, community groups, businesses, industry stakeholders, the Hinchinbrook Shire Council and me. The consultation process has been phased. Firstly, it has sought feedback on several wide corridors of interest and, more recently, on more defined draft alignments. All of these draft alignments involve a bypass of the township of Ingham.

The petition also raises the issue of the potential for the bypass to impact on local farming properties and community infrastructure. When Main Roads first advised me of its plans to upgrade the Bruce Highway between Ingham and the Cardwell Range, I immediately raised the issue of the possible impact on community infrastructure and stressed to Main Roads that community organisations must not be disadvantaged in terms of their facilities. I am pleased to say that Main Roads has advised many of these issues can be addressed.

Although there has been active consultation with local stakeholder groups, this consultation needs to be ongoing. Main Roads has recently released an economic impact study undertaken after direct consultation with more than 100 businesses in Ingham. While during the construction phase local businesses have an opportunity to benefit, a long-term loss in annual turnover has been identified. This means Main Roads needs to support strategies that will minimise these losses, including the development of economic development plans for Ingham and the Herbert River district.

As such, the request from the petitioners that alternative options be explored for mitigating the impact of flooding on the Bruce Highway to minimise any detrimental economic impact on communities in the Herbert River district is a reasonable and legitimate one. I recognise federal funding for this project is linked to national guidelines, but I will continue to respond to requests from local landowners, community groups, businesses and industry stakeholders to facilitate consultation with Main Roads on the upgrade of the Bruce Highway between Ingham and the Cardwell Range, which includes the proposed bypass.